

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Original) A product change method for a cigarette manufacturing machine, wherein an input hopper (2) receives a first type (3a) of shredded tobacco from a supply header (4), and feeds it to at least one channel (17) for forming a bead (19) of tobacco, which is released onto a paper strip (22) travelling along a forming table (20) for forming a continuous cigarette rod (21); the method comprising the steps of cutting off supply of said first type (3a) of tobacco to said manufacturing machine (1); unloading the first type (3a) of shredded tobacco from the manufacturing machine (1) to form a waste stream (30) of shredded tobacco of the first type (3a); and feeding a second type (3b) of shredded tobacco through the supply header (4) and the input hopper (2) until the manufacturing machine (1) is completely full.

2. (Original) A method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein unloading the first type (3a) of tobacco comprises the step of arresting said paper strip (22).

3. (Original) A method as claimed in Claim 2, and comprising the further step of only starting up supply of said paper strip (22) when the manufacturing machine (1) is filled completely with said second type (3b) of shredded tobacco.

4. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in ~~any one of Claims~~ Claim 1 to 3, wherein the first type (3a) of tobacco is unloaded by deflecting said bead (19) of tobacco into container means (31).

5. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in ~~any one of Claims~~ Claim 1 to 4, wherein the first type (3a) of tobacco is unloaded by deflecting said bead (19) of tobacco into container means (31) at an output end of said forming table (20).

6. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in ~~any one of Claims~~ Claim 1 to 5, wherein the manufacturing machine (1) is filled completely with said second type (3b) of shredded tobacco in successive loads; each load being formed inside said header (4) separated from said input hopper (2), and being unloaded into said input hopper (2) by connecting said header (4) to said input hopper (2).

7. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in ~~any one of Claims~~ Claim 1 to 6, wherein the manufacturing machine (1) is filled completely with said second type (3b) of shredded tobacco by forming a bead (19) of the second type (3b) of tobacco along said forming table (20).

8. (Original) A method as claimed in Claim 7, wherein said bead (19) of the second type (3b) of tobacco is left without the relative paper strip (22) until a given desired compactness is achieved.

9. (Original) A method as claimed in Claim 8, wherein said bead (19) of the second type (3b) of tobacco, without the relative said paper strip (22), is deflected into container means (31).

10. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in Claim 8 ~~or 9~~, wherein said paper strip (22) is fed, with the bead (19) of the second type (3b) of tobacco, along said forming table (20) to form a new type of continuous cigarette rod (21); an initial portion of said new type of continuous cigarette rod (21) being deflected into said container means (31).